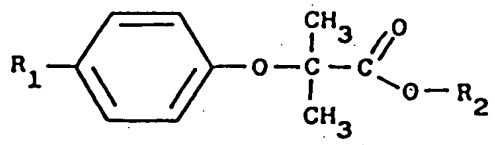
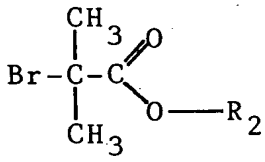
WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for the preparation of a substance selected from the group comprising the fibrates corresponding to the general formula:



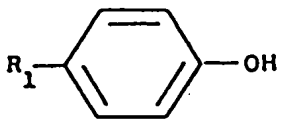
(I)

in which R_1 represents especially a halogen atom (in particular F, Cl or Br, the preferred halogen atom being Cl) or an acetyl, (4-chlorophenyl)hydroxymethyl, 4-chlorobenzoyl or 2-(4-chlorobenzamido)ethyl group and R_2 represents a C_1-C_4 alkyl group in which the hydrocarbon chain is linear or branched, which comprises reacting an excess, relative to the stoichiometric conditions, of an alkyl 2-bromo-2-methylpropanoate of the formula:



(V)

in which R_2 is defined as indicated above, with a substituted phenol of the formula:



(VI)

in which R_1 is defined as indicated above, in the absence of a solvent and in the presence of an excess of

K_2CO_3, relative to the stoichiometric conditions, at a temperature greater than or equal to 120°C, for at least 2 h.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the resulting fibrate is isolated from the reaction medium by precipitation, extraction or distillation.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the reaction medium containing the resulting fibrate is treated with a strong acid to neutralize the excess K_2CO_3, and the fibrate is then isolated from the reaction medium by precipitation, extraction or distillation.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein 1 mol of VI is reacted with about 1.7 to about 2.3 mol of V in the presence of about 0.8 to about 1.8 mol of K_2CO_3, at a temperature of 120 to 160°C, for 3 to 6 hours.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein 1 mol of VI is reacted with about 2 mol of V in the presence of about 1 mol of K_2CO_3, at a temperature of 140 to 145°C.

6. The method according to claim 3, wherein the neutralization of the excess K_2CO_3 is carried out with sulfuric acid at a temperature not exceeding 120°C and preferably of the order of 100°C.

7. The method according to claim 1, wherein:

1°) about one mol of VI is reacted with about 1.7 to about 2.3 mol of V (preferably about 2 mol of V) in the absence of a solvent and in the presence of about 0.8 to about 1.8 mol of K_2CO_3 (preferably about 1 mol of K_2CO_3), at a temperature of 120°C to 160°C (preferably at a temperature of 140°C to 145°C), for at least 2 hours (preferably for 3 to 6 hours),

2°) the excess K_2CO_3 is neutralized with a strong acid at a temperature below 120°C, and

3°) the fibrate is isolated from the reaction medium by precipitation at a temperature below 60°C, or by extraction or distillation.

8. The method according to claim 1 for the preparation of fenofibrate, wherein:

(a) about 1 mol of VI in which R_1 is the 4-chlorobenzoyl group is reacted with about 2 mol of V in which R_2 is the isopropyl group, in the absence of a solvent and in the presence of about 1 mol of K_2CO_3, at a temperature of about 140°C to about 145°C, for about 5 hours,

(b) after the addition of aqueous isopropanol to the resulting reaction medium, the excess K_2CO_3 is neutralized with sulfuric acid at a temperature of the order of 100°C,

(c) the resulting reaction medium is cooled to a temperature of between 15 and 25°C and the precipitate of fenofibrate is collected by filtration,

(d) the precipitate filtered off in this way is washed with sodium hydroxide followed by water, and then

(e) the fenofibrate is recrystallized from aqueous isopropanol.

9. The method of preparation according to claim 1 for the synthesis of a fibrate of the formula I in which R_2 = H, wherein the corresponding ester is prepared, according to the method of claim 1, by reacting the substituted phenol VI with an alkyl 2-bromo-2-methyl-propanoate of the formula V in which R_2 is a C_1-C_4 alkyl group, in the absence of a solvent, and the resulting ester is then saponified.